DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 709 HE 027 594

AUTHOR Riedinger, Edward A.
TITLE The Rio Educational Advising Office and the Country Coordination of Educational Advising in Brazil.
PUB DATE [85]
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Planning; Colleges; *Educational Counseling; Foreign Countries; Foreign Students; *Guidance Centers; Higher Education; *International Educational Exchange; Program Descriptions; Reference Materials; Universities
IDENTIFIERS *Brazil; United States

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the activities of the Office of Educational Advising (OEA), located in the U.S. Consulate-General in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The OEA, originally established in 1969, provides counseling to over 7,000 individuals per year who seek information about educational opportunities in the United States. The Fulbright Commission is responsible for the staffing of the OEA and its branch and related offices. The initial counseling process utilizes videotapes and an interview with an advisor to explain the basic organization of the American education system, as well as the requirements and costs of study in the United States. Individuals seeking further assistance are provided with detailed reference materials on specific programs and institutions in the United States, along with assistance in the application process. The addresses and telephone numbers of 15 counseling centers located throughout Brazil are provided. The paper concludes by examining the importance of international educational exchange and the role that educational advising plays in fostering such exchange. Recommendations for improving the capabilities of advisement centers in Brazil are also discussed. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ADVISING

THE RIO EDUCATIONAL ADVISING OFFICE AND THE COUNTRY COORDINATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADVISING IN BRAZIL

Edward A. Riedinger

ED 372 709

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Edward A. Riedinger

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

THE RIO EDUCATIONAL ADVISING OFFICE AND THE COUNTRY COORDINATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADVISING IN BRAZIL

The Fulbright Commission was established in Brazil in 1957 as an agency for the exchange of students and professors between Brazil and the United States. But for Brazilian students to study in the United States, it became apparent that it was necessary to have a service that could inform them about the differences between the educational system of the two countries, about selecting schools in the U.S., and on procedures for admission and financing. Consequently, in 1969, the Commission established an Office of Counseling Services (renamed Office of Educational Advising in 1985) as an educational information and orientation service. During the course of the Office's history it has served almost 75,000 users.

Although the Commission is headquartered in Brasília, at the Casa Thomas Jefferson, the Office of Educational Advising is located in Rio de Janeiro, in the American Consulate-General. The Office is responsible both for responding to those in Rio who seek an American education and for coordinating in Brazil support to all other advising offices. The Rio Office has an annual user rate of over 7,000 people. If one includes the number of users at the advising service of the binational center, the Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos (IBEU), which is supported by the Office, more than 10,000 people per year are served in the Rio region. The staff of the Fulbright Office which serves this public consists of one part-time and five full-time employees: an educational advising officer, an educational advising specialist, an educational advising assistant, a secretary, and two clerks. The public for advising in all of Brazil is estimated at being annually more than 20,000 persons. There are currently fourteen advising services in Brazil serving this public. Brazilians already studying in the United States number almost 3,000.

WHO SEEKS EDUCATIONAL ADVISING

Information about study is sought by Brazilians for all levels of education and for an entire variety of subjects. The majority of requests are for graduate study, to obtain master's or doctoral degrees, particularly in Engineering or Business Administration. Many professionals or recent university graduates look for short courses in continuing education in order to advance or update knowledge in their particular field. Many medical doctors seek to do such study or to do a residency or fellowship in an American hospital.

Besides graduate study, many seek undergraduate programs. There are those too who wish to do high school in the United States; and there is even the occasional request for grade school. A large group seeks intensive English courses.

Often individuals are aware not only of the level and area of study, but usually when and often where they want to go. A great number identify California as the preferred place of study; and many indicate preference for the widely-known prestige schools, such as Harvard, Stanford, and Berkeley. Indeed, there has even been the inquiry from someone wishing to study at Harvard and live in California. (No doubt this would have required a lot of homework in planes.)

THE EDUCATIONAL ADVISING PROCESS

Whether a person has a clear or an imperfect idea of what he or she wants to study, the first responsibility of the advising office is to begin to inform the individual thoroughly and accurately about the American educational system and how entry into it can be obtained. To begin this information transmission process, the advising office uses a variety of resources.

For most inquiries, once a person has identified his/her educational objective, he/she is shown a videotape relevant to the particular area and level of study he/she wishes to pursue. The videotape, lasting ten to fifteen minutes, first explains the basic organization of the American system of education, particularly claifying differences in relation to the Brazilian: that the academic year begins in August or September, not March; it has a duration of nine, not eight months; admission is competitive based upon a variety of academic qualifications, not just a vestibular, etc.

The videotape next concentrates on how one can find out what universities or schools exist for one's particular area of study. It orients the person in how to use research guides and directories, along with university catalogs.

The final part of the tape concentrates upon the steps to be followed in requesting admission to specific institutions. It points out the kind of documents, such as application for admission forms, test results, transcripts, and letters of recommendation that must be presented. Moreover, it emphasizes the time factor of a "deadline" which must often be followed in presenting such documents.

In addition to watching the tape, the inquirer receives a printed form of the tape's basic contents in order to review the information. (It might be added that Brazil was among the first countries to produce videotapes for the initial stage of educational advising.) The next phase of informing the individual is an interview with an adviser. This phase of the information transmission process is among the most important because it is at this point that a more realistic and personal perspective on the inquirer's objective can be taken.

In the interview with an adviser one can learn if the person has a realistic idea of what the costs of study in the United States will be (at least US$12,000 per year); of what the academic qualifications, especially for a scholarship, are; of what an advanced command of the English language means in order to perform adequately in an American educational environment.

Once an inquirer has realistically perceived the requirements for study in the U.S., it may be that he or she resolves that they cannot meet them at the present time. If, however, they feel they can, the adviser may aid him or her more specifically in terms of the research which now must be done in order to find the educational institution appropriate to their particular needs and qualifications.

Thus the research phase of the inquirer's pursuit of American education begins. For this research an advising office offers very specialized reference resources. It contains guides, organized by academic disciplines or fields of study, listing all the universities which offer that particular specialization. In addition it has directories, separate volumes for each academic area, describing each university department for that discipline; for example, a volume describing all the Economics departments in American univer-

sities, or all the Geography, Business Administration, Physics, or History departments. Besides these guides and directories, the Office maintains, by fields of study, university brochures and pamphlets on specialized programs. Furthermore, the Office maintains information on the assessment of academic programs by institution and department.

In addition to these guides, directories, and special files, the advising office also maintains a collection of university catalogs, both in book form and microfiche (reader/printer available). Thus the catalog of any institution of higher education in the United States, of which there are more than 3,000, can be consulted.

The educational advising collection is specialized not only in relation to higher education, but also offers reference resources for primary and secondary education, for technical and short courses, and for intensive English courses.

As an inquirer pursues his/her research, and in the case of higher education such work entails several visits to the advising office, it is important that his/her research be accompanied by an adviser. For this reason, a record of office visits made by each inquirer is kept. In addition, each inquirer is encouraged to use a "worksheet" so that the adviser can review what the individual is doing, clarifying doubts and aiding decisions.

At this stage the inquirer also has access to the Office "alumni" file. This file records, by area of study and institution, those students who have graduated from American universities. These alumni have consented to leave their name, address, and phone number on file with the Office and available to inquirers wanting to study in the same field or school. These alumni are an exceptional resource for current information on specific institutions and specialized areas.

Not only does the advising office offer extensive specialized information regarding schools in the United States, but it also has complete information on sources of financial aid, both from American and Brazilian agencies. Moreover it keeps a supply of registration bulletins for admissions tests: the SAT (Scholastic Aptitute Test), for undergraduate education; the GRE (Graduate Record Examination), for graduate study; the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test), for business schools, and the FMGEMS (Foreign Medical Graduate Examination in the Medical Sciences), for doctors wishing to do a residency in the U.S. The Office also gives basic information regarding visas: the F-1 and M-1, student visas, and J-1, exchange visitor. Important too is orientation for cultural adaptation in the United States, pre-departure orientation programs.

THE EDUCATIONAL ADVISING OFFICES IN BRAZIL

As can be seen, extensive resources and materials are dedicated to educational advising. There are three major advising Offices in Brazil, in Brasília, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. In addition other advising offices exist in most of the large cities in the country. The offices in Brazil are:

Manaus
Administração
Instituto Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Avenida Joaquim Nabuco, 1286

69.000 - Manaus, Amazonas
Tel.: (092) 232-5919

Belém
Biblioteca
Centro Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Avenida Padre Eutíquio, 1309
66.000 - Belém, Pará
Tel.: (091) 223-9455, 223-9987

São Luis
Assistente Cultural
Instituto Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Rua do Sol, 247
65.000 - São Luis, Maranhão
Tel.: (098) 222-8583

Fortaleza
Assistente Cultural
Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos
Rua Solon Pinheiro, 58
60.050 - Fortaleza, Ceará
Tel.: (085) 221-3599

Recife
Assistente Cultural
USIS
Consulado dos E.U.A.
Rua Gonçalves Maia, 163
50.070 - Recife, Pernambuco
Tel.: (081) 222-2380

Salvador
Consultas Educacionais
Associação Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Avenida Sete de Setembro, 1883
Tel.: (071) 247-4411

Brasília
Consultas Educacionais
Casa Thomas Jefferson
SEP-Sul, EQ 706-906
70.350 - Brasília, Distrito Federal
Tel.: (061) 243-6588, Ramal 15

Belo Horizonte
Consultas Educacionais
Instituto Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Rua da Bahia, 1723
30.000 - Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais
Tel.: (031) 226-7633

Vitória
Biblioteca
Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos

Rua Madeira de Freitas, 75 - Praia do Canto
29.000 - Vitória, Espírito Santo
Tel.: (027) 227-4153

Rio de Janeiro
For Graduate and Undergraduate Study
Seção de Consultas Educacionais
Fulbright Commission
Consulado Geral dos E.U.A.
Av. Presidente Wilson, 147 - 3º andar - Centro
20.030 - Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
Tel.: (021) 262-8423
For Undergraduate Study
Comissão de Bolsas
Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos
Av. N.S. de Copacabana, 690 - 10º andar
22.050 - Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
Tel.: (021) 255-8332, Ramal 22

São Paulo
Departamento de Consultas Educacionais
Associação Alumni
Rua Visconde de Nacar, 86
Morumbi
05685 - São Paulo, São Paulo
Tel.: (011) 543-3866

Curitiba
Biblioteca
Centro Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos
Rua Amintas de Barros, 99
80.000 - Curitiba, Paraná
Tel.: (041) 233-3422

Florianópolis
Seção de Referência
Biblioteca Universitária
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
Campus Universitário - Trindade
88.000 - Florianópolis, Santa Catarina
Tel.: (0482) 33-9310

Porto Alegre
Serviço de Aconselhamento
Instituto Cultural Brasileiro-Norte-Americano
Rua Riachuelo, 1257 - 3º andar
90.000 - Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul
Tel.: (051) 225-2255

Coordination of these offices occurs through the Rio Office of Educational Advising of the Fulbright Commission. This Office supplies materials and training to others. Materials consist of monthly transmissions of books, catalogs, handout models, video-

tapes, and other items. Training comprises a basic course, of two to three days duration, for any new adviser entering the service. Further training occurs in annual updating workshops for all advisers in the country.

In addition to materials and training, the Office provides research services for the others offices, responding to inquiries for which other offices do not have sufficient resources. Furthermore, the Office maintains communication and updating of information for advisers through a quarterly Educational Advising Newsletter.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADVISING

It has been considered important to develop educational advising in order to increase the quantity of persons having the opportunity to study in the U.S. and to improve the quality of decisions made regarding such study. Educational exchange is among the most important long-range assets in establishing mature relations between countries. Insofar as educational advising allows more people to study in the United States and at the schools or in the programs most relevant to their intellectual and professional development, it serves in a crucial manner this long-range objective of international relations, strengthening the cultural, economic, and political ties between countries. It also can establish long-range personal, commercial, and professional associations.

Educational exchange benefits developing countries by giving access to advanced technology. It also greatly benefits developed countries by giving a more international character to education, thus aiding students and educators to obtain a more accurate perception of the world. Such a perception is particularly important in the United States. The U.S. has some of the most important multinational responsibilities in the world, making crucial decisions about the global economy and society. Yet numerous reports show the ignorance of Americans, the international cultural illiteracy of the United States. A dangerous discrepancy exists in which the country with the greatest multinational and global responsibilities is often unaware of the international environment in which it operates.

To the extent that the presence of foreign students can reduce this ignorance, encouraging an increase in their numbers is to be firmly supported. As overseas advising becomes a more efficient educational information distribution system it can more effectively channel foreing students into the United States.

The importance of advising can also be observed in relation to a criticism which is sometimes made of educational exchange, that it is a short-term financial drain. Advising is one service within the spectrum of educational exchange activities which channels funds back to the United States. And indeed, as such, nothing which has so far been spent on this service equals the amount which it has channeled into the United States. Certainly while such rechanneling of resources back into the country is not the reason for advising existing, such a contribution should be recognized and become a strong reason for firmly supporting and broadening educational information systems abroad.

It should also be observed that government-sponsored edu-

cational exchange in general affects, almost by its nature, a very small, often elite group. Advising, by dealing with the general public, gives a greater profile to the possibility of an American education and to U.S. public diplomacy.

The relevance of advising as an educational information distribution system can also be perceived in an historical perspective. Until the Civil War, the primary or extractive sector dominated the American economy. From that period until the middle of this century, the secondary or manufacturing sector prevailed. Since the middle of this century the tertiary or service sector has come to dominate. But we are now beginning to perceive a new emphasis emerge, a fourth or information sector. In the most objective sense, education is information generation and maintenance. Thus educational information, or information about the generation and maintenance of information, comes to be more and more at the heart of the changing character of the American and world economy. Advising as an educational information system is fully complementary to this development.

As an educational information system, it is hoped that in the future advising will be able to take advantage of computers for its service (given anticipated reduction in hardware costs and the availability of software). The use of mini-computers, country-wide telephone hook-up, and print-out facilities will allow a more thorough coordination of educational advising in Brazil, and ideally for a wider region.

Such assets will allow greater and more updated educational information to be distributed in a more thorough and efficient manner. With these possibilities in mind and with the system which has so far been established, it can be hoped that advising in Brazil will continue to develop and reach its goals.

Edward A. Riedinger, Ph.D.

Educational Advising Officer
Fulbright Commission of Brazil